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Darko Maričević and Joanna Sofaer

Bird imagery is one of the most striking themes explored by Bronze Age potters in many parts of Europe, not least along the middle and the lower reaches of the Danube in the Carpathian Basin and Central Balkans. While the ideas and the symbolism at the root of this widespread manifestation were broadly shared and had their origin in the Bronze Age belief system, the way in which bird imagery was expressed in clay was highly variable. These variations offer an opportunity to explore the creative processes behind bird-shaped and bird-ornamented objects.

All bird-shaped and bird-ornamented clay objects were a conceptual marriage of bird iconography and the utilitarian role of the object. In creating bird-shaped objects potters faced a number of choices that deviated from those routinely offered by the production of vessels that formed the bulk of their potting work. Many of the bird representations, while recognizable as birds, either lack features such as a head or wings, or have extra features such as four legs. It is therefore clear that the representation of birds was highly variable in its degree of naturalism and was not necessarily always intended to be realistic, allowing for creative expression. It is through the workability of clay as a material on one side, and the maker's skill, imagination and external influences on the other, that the final form of the object became reality.

Types of Bird-Shaped and Bird-Ornamented Ceramics

Previous studies in the region have concentrated on the typology, chronology and distribution of bird representations (Kovács 1972), their cataloguing, contextual analysis and possible religious roles (Szathmári 2003, Guba and Szeverényi 2007), decorative motifs and their symbolism (Reich 2005), as well as the ornithological identification of bird images as waterfowl (Vasić and Vasić 2000, 2003-2004; Sturm-Berger 2003). The range of three-dimensional plastic bird imagery related to ceramic objects includes solid and hollow clay bird figurines, bird-shaped rattles, vessels with bird-head protomes or projections, and bird-shaped vessels. The latter includes both bird-shaped containers as well as highly stylised askoi. In addition, bird imagery appears as a two-dimensional motif incised on pottery.

Solid and hollow clay figurines of birds are the rarest form of bird-shaped object in the Carpathian Basin and Lower Danube (Figure 1), although some well-known objects such as the aquatic birds (possibly mallards) pulling the famous Dupljaja chariot broadly fall into this category (Garašanin 1951, Bonev 1996, Vasić and Vasić 2003-2004). Most examples of clay bird figurines in the area are relatively late and date to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition in the Srem region of Vojvodina in Serbia and neighbouring

Slavonia in northern Croatia (Medović 1988, Metzner-Nebelsick 2002, Ilkić 2006, Ložnjak Dizdar pers.comm.).

More widespread are the hollow models of birds made into rattles (Figure 2). In the Carpathian Basin and the Lower Danube their chronology mainly fits within Middle Bronze Age traditions (Kovacz 1972, Guba and Szeverényi 2007). Elsewhere, such as in the Lusatian Culture in the north-east of Europe, rattles become rather numerous in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Conceptually these objects form a distinct group that is clearly defined by their bird shape on one hand and their function as an object to create sound on the other. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of variation within this basic concept, even among bird-shaped rattles found in the same area or related to the same ceramic tradition. A relatively small proportion of rattles in the Carpathian Basin and the Lower Danube region exhibit sufficient similarity in shape, decoration and degree of stylisation to have been recognised as a clearly defined sub-type (Guba and Szeverényi 2007).

Pottery vessels, such as bowls and jugs, can feature either fully formed bird-shaped protomes attached to the rim, handle or shoulder of the vessel, or bird-shaped projections of the rim (Figure 3). These two groups have mutually exclusive distributions. The protomes occur on both Middle and Late Bronze Age bowls and jugs in the Lower Danube region on either side of the modern Serbian-Romanian border, for example on bowls from Vajuga and Glamija in Serbia (Premk et al. 1986, Krstić 2003) and bowls and jugs from Ostrovul Mare in Romania (Berciu 1939). The bird-shaped rim projections mainly date to the Middle Bronze Age. They are on bowls in southern Pannonia at sites such as Vršac-At and Feudvar in Vojvodina, and Szeremle in south Hungary (Reich 2005), but also further north at Pákozd-Várhegy (Guba and Szeverényi 2007). After c.800BC birds cease to be the sole carrier of animal symbolism and are joined by bovines, equines and other forms of imagery characteristic of the early Hallstatt period, while zoomorphic models, protomes and appliqués become more varied and common in clay and in metal (Kossack 1954, Benac 1983, 1987, Patek 1993).

Bird-shaped vessels come either as containers or askoi made for pouring (Figure 4). Both of these are more numerous during the Middle Bronze Age, but continue into the Late Bronze Age (Kovacs 1972; Filipov 1974; Kalicz-Schreiber 1991; Shalganova 1995; Guba and Szeverényi 2007). Bird–shaped containers are found across the Carpathian Basin and Lower Danube region, but are particularly concentrated along the Lower Danube within the Žuto Brdo-Garla Mare cultural complex. They exhibit close stylistic similarities to each other (e.g. Berciu 1939, Dumitrescu 1961, Filipov 1974) and are rather homogenous in shape compared to their more diverse counterparts from the Carpathian Basin. Some of the bird-shaped containers from the Lower Danube region are similar in their shape to the vessels with attached protomes, the difference being that in the former the entire vessel forms a representation of a bird, rather than the bird protome simply being attached to the vessel. Askoi are virtually unknown in the Lower Danube region at this time and are concentrated in the Carpathian Basin to the east of the Danube.

Bird-shaped containers and askoi cannot be seen as regional variants of each other as they are not entirely compatible in a functional sense. Some of the containers have perforations

or lug handles, which suggest that they might have been suspended on relatively thin strings or cords. By contrast, in addition to being made for pouring liquid, many (but not all) askoi are larger vessels with broad bases, which were required in order to make them stable when full and heavy. These differences pose a series of questions about the respective roles of these vessels, not only in terms of the social context that they were meant to be seen in, but also with regard to the different contents that they might have held.

The incised bird motif is exceptionally rare on ceramic vessels in the Carpathian Basin and the Lower Danube throughout the Middle Bronze Age. It is not until after c.800BC that this form of highly stylised decoration appears on pottery vessels (Tasić 1991, Czyborra 1997) (Figure 5). Such two-dimensional representations did not, however, replace three-dimensional bird-shaped objects as the latter did not entirely disappear in the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. Rather there were local differences in the uptake of bird-shaped and bird-ornamented objects. In Slavonia and in neighbouring areas west of the Carpathian Basin such as Istria, Slovenia and northern Italy, for example, two-dimensional bird images appear around the same time as their three-dimensional counterparts, on the cusp of the Iron Age (Vasić 1973; Benac 1983, 1987; Metzner-Nebelsick 1997, 2002; Majnarić-Pandžić 1998; Ilkić 2006). For most of the Bronze Age these regions seem to have been outside the bird-forming ceramic traditions present in the Carpathian Basin and the Lower Danube. This is particularly striking in relation to Slavonia, which is in the eastern part of the Carpathian Basin and is otherwise culturally and geographically closely connected by the River Danube to both Hungary in the north and Vojvodina in the east throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Age (Tasić 1974, Majnarić-Pandžić 1985, Ložnjak-Dizdar 2004). Further specific regional sequences and developments in bird imagery can be observed in other parts of Europe (Kossack 1954, Gediga 1970, Buck 1996, Gedl 1996), especially in the north and west of the continent for example in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and eastern Germany.

Creativity in Shape in Bird-shaped and Bird-ornamented Clay Objects

Different types of bird-shaped and bird–ornamented objects employed distinct kinds of creative solutions in order to link the idea of the bird with ceramic forms. These also required different levels of technical skill in their realisation. One solution to the incorporation of bird imagery was to add bird iconography to an existing ceramic form. This was also the least technically demanding option. This could be done either by adding plastic bird depictions in the form of bird-head protomes or by decorating a vessel surface with two-dimensional bird images. Neither of these two types of embellishment changed the basic shape of the pot. Modelling one or more parts of the rim of the vessel to form projections shaped like a bird's head went half a step further towards creating a bird-shaped vessel but still did not alter the basic vessel shape. In this case the difference to the vessels with added protomes is mostly in the technique, which did not involve joining together the two preformed entities of the vessel and the bird. Instead the shaping of the bird's head was the last step in the shaping of the body of the vessel and was made by

pulling and shaping the clay away from the rim. It constitutes a modification of an existing form rather than its full reconceptualisation.

As opposed to the additive solutions outlined above, a more radical means of linking the bird and ceramic forms involved the full fusion of imagery and form, as is found in bird-shaped containers and askoi. This required a completed redefinition of the nature of existing vessel types through the development of novel vessel forms. It was also a more technically demanding response to the desire to integrate birds with ceramic forms as it changed the shape of the pottery vessel so that it resembled the bird's body, with or without representations of all anatomical features such as tail, wings, legs or head. It was particularly challenging because it changed the fundamental geometry of the vessel from a familiar round shape to an asymmetric, bird-shaped form. The biggest difficulty associated with this is getting the balance of the vessel right, especially as at least some of these vessels held liquid. By impacting on the overall roundness and symmetry of the vessel its stability would be affected by even a relatively small degree of deformation. This is particularly true of the askoi, which, being most asymmetrical in shape, show the highest degree of deformation compared to other contemporary vessels and would therefore have been the most difficult form to get right.

The integration of bird imagery and ceramic shape can also be seen in the way that the formation of the shape of the bird's body was a basic requirement in the production of bird-shaped figurines and rattles. The added technical quirk in the making of the bird-shaped rattles is that the clay had to be still sufficiently soft before the objects were closed, while at the same time their contents must not stick to the inside of the objects during the drying process, otherwise they would not work as rattles.

Bird-shaped vessels and bird-shaped rattles were the most dramatic conceptual departures from the shapes in existing ceramic repertoires. They were also the most technically demanding objects to make of all the categories considered in this essay. Yet at the same time they are by far the most numerous ceramic bird representations in the Bronze Age. The paucity of comparatively simple plastic bird representations in the form of solid clay figurines, which can be formed by stretching and pinching a lump of clay, is not only surprising but serves to emphasise the close association of bird imagery with relatively few well-defined ceramic types. It also reveals particular kinds of creative responses to the development of bird-ornamented and bird-shaped objects. The associations between bird imagery and different ceramic types were not random. Bronze Age potters had clear ideas about which forms should be associated with birds.

'Birdness' and the Ways in Which it was Achieved

Although the number of categories of bird-shaped and bird-ornamented clay ceramic objects in the region was very limited, even a cursory visual inspection of the corpus of bird-shaped and bird-ornamented objects reveals a great variety of different looking objects. It may be argued that this reflects a wide range of ways in which potters responded to the challenge of taking on a seemingly unified subject – the bird. In other words, potters

chose different creative paths within the otherwise restricted range of bird-shaped ceramics.

If a potter's aim was to create an object that was both functional and socially meaningful in terms of its bird iconography, then what was required was something that, in its essence, encapsulated both utilitarianism and 'birdness'. 'Birdness' is used here to characterise the visual and other sensory qualities of objects that were made to look like birds. Although, by definition, all of the objects discussed here carry a degree of 'birdness', their ability to evoke an image of a bird as seen in nature varies tremendously according to the levels of stylisation or realism applied in their production. On one hand there are objects that are heavily stylised or abstracted. On the other hand there are objects that have naturalistically depicted avian anatomical features. Furthermore, some objects also evoked 'birdness' through sound or movement. The different ways of creating 'birdness' must not be understood as a qualitative gradation by which one or other end of the scale should be classed as more or less successful or meaningful. It would be a mistake to think about these objects merely as imitations of natural forms. Instead, there were many different ways to make a bird and many different ideas about what best constituted a bird. Given the widespread cultural significance of bird symbolism in the Bronze Age and the longevity of its popularity, perhaps it is to be expected that behind the general unity of the concept there may have been more than one meaning that altered over space and time. In other words, the basic notion of 'the bird' had different interpretations that were frequently renegotiated.

Much of the variation apparent among ceramic bird forms can be ascribed to departures from the realistic representation of natural forms through stylisation and abstraction. The stylisation of bird-shaped ceramic objects was realised by reduction and omission of certain anatomical features and bodily details of the bird. . Abstraction can generally be understood as a visual paring down from the realism of a portrait-like representation through the introduction of visual metaphors. This can be seen in objects in which angular lines have been introduced to stand for feathers or where functional parts of the pottery vessel, such as handles and pedestal bases, have replaced anatomical features, such as wings and legs (Figs. 1, 3 and 4). At one level, by non-commitment to the naturalism of the portrait, in abstraction the maker gained much greater freedom of expression. At another other level, the technical side of the task was often greatly simplified without danger that the intended message of the object would be lost, as long as a certain degree of 'birdness' was retained.

Reduction was most often applied to the lateral extremities: the wings, tail, legs and head/neck (e.g. Figures 1, 2b, 4a). Rather than representing the full extent of such features the maker could decide to represent them in reduced form as small projections or stumps which are out of proportion to the body, but nevertheless contribute to the 'birdness' of the object. This process was at times extended further so that certain anatomical features were omitted completely (Figs. 2a, 4b-c, h-i,). Once again it was the extremities that were usually chosen for such treatment, perhaps because they often did not play any functional role in the object or could even be detrimental to it. It is interesting to note that their absence does not significantly impact on the 'birdness' of the object as 'birdness' was frequently clear from other aspects of the object such as body shape.

The relationship between the utilitarian role of objects and their 'birdness' was sometimes further negotiated by the replacement of a bird's anatomical features with functional parts of the object. These are normally handles or, particularly on some bird-shaped vessels, pedestal bases. Handles could be placed onto the side of the bird-shaped vessel so that they not only performed their function, but also created a reduced version of the bird's wings (eg Figures 4d-e). A similar effect was achieved with the pedestal bases, these forming the legs and the feet of the bird (e.g. Figures 1, 2a-b, d-g). It is not uncommon that a combination of several techniques was applied to a single object. For example, askoi from Hungary often express extreme abstraction, indeed they are defined as a form by the omission of the bird's head and its replacement with the vessel opening (Figure 4 g-i).

Although the anatomical extremities offered possibilities for reduction, omission and replacement, the retention of the shape of the bird's body was more or less compulsory for all bird-shaped vessels and rattles. Yet the bird's body alone is rarely enough for a ceramic vessel to resemble a bird without some other indication of the neck, tail or wings. The exact boundaries of different parts of a bird are sometimes difficult to draw, but it is often enough to have one end tapered in a manner that suggests the tail in order that the vessel can unmistakably be recognised as a bird. In many cases, the bird's chest is also suggested by the widening of the object's profile. This effectively constitutes the basic bird shape, which could be elaborated upon in a number of different ways. Many bird-shaped vessels, especially in the Žuto Brdo-Garla Mare tradition, do not deviate much from a basic globular vessel shape but by adding even slight asymmetry to the vessel the potter could achieve the impression of the bird's body, especially if other features such as tail, neck or head were indicated. Making the body of the pot asymmetric has the effect of angling the central axis of the vessel in one direction and creating the sense of the front, sides and back of a bird.

Occasionally the three-dimensional Bronze Age bird representations have added features borrowed from other animals or humans. Most often these include bovine horns or extra legs, including human-like feet or facial depictions (Reich 2005; Palincaş 2010). Mixing anthropomorphism with bird imagery is attested from early in the Middle Bronze Age, while bovine associations increase in number during the Late Bronze Age (Kossack 1954; Kovacs 1972). The important aspect to highlight of this ornithomorphic - zoomorphic - anthropomorphic 'mishmash' is that all of these objects remain 'birds', albeit with added extras. As far as the Middle and Late Bronze Age imagery is concerned, the central role of the bird does not seem to have been questioned. In other words, we do not find ceramic representations of horses or bulls with wings or birds heads. Nevertheless, such additions introduce challenges to the 'birdness' of the objects, which was usually retained through the basic shape of a bird's body. The perception of the object, however, becomes dependent on the angle from which it is viewed (Palincaş 2010). For example, with horned birds it is often the case that their identity is much more ambiguous when viewed from the front because the bird's body shape and its head with the beak/bill is always most recognisable from the profile. Likewise, birds with four-feet might be perceived as quadrupeds only from the profile as the front view conceals the additional limbs. These hybrid features create ambiguity and may suggest an ability to 'shape-shift' which might have been essential to the narratives they were intended to project. It has to be stated,

however, that not all ceramics with four feet were necessarily meant to be animal crossovers. Some may have been made in such a way simply to balance the object.

Many of the most abstracted bird representations related to Bronze Age ceramic objects are the incised two-dimensional depictions of birds on otherwise non-bird-shaped vessels. They appear on Basarabi pottery and related ceramic styles across southern Pannonia and the eastern and central Balkans where they were often formed through the combination of S-lines and triangles. Here birds became part of broader compositions on pottery. They often form repetitive patterns that were used decoratively to fill particular zones on the surface of vessels or to emphasise aspects of vessel geometry (Figure 5). There are several 'schools' of stylised bird depictions which appear at the end of the Bronze Age and during the transition to the Early Iron Age but it is important to stress that for most of the Bronze Age ceramic bird imagery was an emphatically three-dimensional phenomenon in the Carpathian Basin and Lower Danube region. Further to the west equally stylised bird depictions appear on Urnfield influenced pottery from Istria and northern Italy (Hencken 1968, Vasić 1973). These compositions often closely resemble the bird imagery seen on bronze vessels, forming circular bird 'processions' around the pot.

Nonetheless, in some ways these two-dimensional bird images are not radically different from some of the three-dimensional bird-shaped ceramic objects discussed above. Both are characterised by heavy stylisation without too much concern for the realism of the bird imagery sometimes to the point of being schematic as is the case with some of the the two-dimensional representations. . The emphasis is different, however, in as much as two-dimensional birds form part of broader compositions, which may also involve other kinds of schematic and abstract imagery. Furthermore, the two-dimensional bird images are frequently standardised and replicated on a much greater scale than their three-dimensional counterparts. This marks a clear departure from the earlier bird-forming ceramic tradition of the Middle Bronze Age related to the production of bird-shaped vessels and rattles, which were frequently characterised by individual blends of attributes that defined their 'birdness' and that gave the objects a level of uniqueness beyond their identification with a certain ceramic type. In Middle Bronze Age contexts the deployment of birds in patterns or as part of wider compositions was relatively rare. Bird-head protomes were sometimes replicated around the rim or the shoulder of the same vessel, for example at its quarter or half-points but overall there is not the same level of repetition and density of pattern as in the later two-dimensional bird images. Thus, we can recognise two different ways of incorporating bird imagery into ceramics that were explored by Bronze Age potters; one that was centred on the 'birdness' of an individual object and another that used multiple repeated bird images in the building of a broader composition.

'Birdness' was also evoked through haptic engagement with objects. The bird-shaped rattles require shaking in order to produce sound. This opened additional sensory avenues to the audience by adding another kind of experience to the already established connection between the rattle and its bird shape. The fact that the sound produced by the rattles is not necessarily the sound a bird would make was probably not important. Instead it is arguable that the entire set of associations was a closed package; it was concreted by a repetitive performance through which the association between the rattle sound and the rattle shape

was learned and from there on expected by the audience. In addition to the sound produced by the object, motion could also be introduced through shaking the object whilst held in the hand. A certain number of bird-shaped rattles have perforations, often on their wings, feet or the crests on their backs, which were probably used to hang the rattles on some sort of string or cord (Figure 2b-c), and perhaps to whirl the bird around to make it 'fly'.

Askoi can be seen as recreating some of the bird's natural back and forth motions when used for pouring, resembling the way birds move when feeding. The way the askoi were handled might also have been important to the overall experience provoked by the object. Most of them require both hands to be used due to their shape, size and weight, especially when full. Movement was also sometimes communicated in the shape of objects. A small number of bird-shaped objects have movement expressed in the shape of the neck and the head, for example by tilting it over slightly to the side. This too constitutes a fundamental part of their 'birdness'. It can be seen, for example, in a bird-shaped vessel from Cîrna (Figure 4 – add object to Fig 4) and a bird-shaped rattle from Cruceni, Romania (Figure 2 – add object to Fig 2) (see Dumitrescu 1961, PL. LXXIV.297; Szentmiklosi 2006, Pl II.1). In both cases the representation of the movement of the neck and the head is clearly deliberate. The Cîrna vessel is much more realistically executed and its movement is both dramatic and completely believable. The movement on the rattle from Cruceni is much more subtle, yet it has the effect of making the abstract representation of the bird's head, in particular, more real. The latter was emphasised with the help of a slight turn of the decoration at the front and the back of the neck, which supports the sense of bird-like head movement.

Decoration

Decoration provided another opportunity for creativity in the articulation of 'birdness', particularly when applied to three-dimensional plastic representations. At the same time, decoration was also used to put the signature of a particular ceramic tradition onto an object. It allowed potters to visually embed objects within their own cultural background although the bird iconography that was being represented had a resonance that went beyond their own community.

To illustrate both of these points we use two brief examples from different parts of the study area. The first of these is a group of askoi from the Urnfield cemetery of Békásmegyer in what is today Budapest (Kalicz-Schreiber 1991) (Figure 6a). The askoi were part of a very distinctive assemblage with a number of unusual forms including fenestrated cinerary urns, spouted 'libation' vessels, boot-shaped vessels, firedogs and a series of small star-shaped and spoon-shaped ceramic objects interpreted as being part of a shaman's kit (Kalicz-Schreiber 1991). Irrespective of form the majority of vessels were highly burnished to create a shiny surface and were modestly decorated with parallel fluting. The latter emphasised different parts of the vessels by running around the neck, the widest part of the belly, the top of the shoulder, or around the spout. Perpendicular zones of fluting were also used to emphasise different zones, for example around the belly of urns. Askoi were also decorated in this way. In their case the fluting follows the shape of

the bird, flowing along the widest part of the body, running perpendicular across the back and up to the handle, and around the neck. In some instances fluting continued across the back of the bird shape and into a projected tail, which was plastically modelled, thus creating representation of the feathers. Overall the effect of the burnish and fluting worked together to visually unify the otherwise rather disparate assemblage.

The second example is drawn from across Lower Danube region, which is characterised in the Middle Bronze Age by a distinctive tradition of profusely decorated encrusted pottery. The rich corpus of bird-shaped and bird-ornamented forms from this area conforms to the same extravagant style of decoration as other ceramic objects in the region (Figure 6b). Here local potters used some of the same motifs from the repertoires found in assemblages from key sites in order to decorate bird-shaped objects, such as from the cemeteries at Glamija-Korbovo, Pesak and Vajuga-Pesak in Serbia (Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1961, Letica 1974, Premk et al. 1986, Krstić 2003), Cîrna and Balta Verde in Romania (Berciu and Consa 1956, Dumitrescu 1961), Orsoya in Bulgaria (Filipov 1974), as well as settlement sites at Livade, Serbia (Vukmanović and Popović 1986) or Ostrovul Mare, Romania (Berciu 1939). One of the most intriguing motifs is the apparent depiction of faces. These can be seen on anthropomorphic figurines found in the area and are also sometimes found on the neck or chest of bird-shaped vessels. This may suggest possibilities of bird-human crossovers as also found elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin, such as the bird-shaped rattles with human feet or anthropomorphic askoi (Reich 2005, Palincaş 2010).

Conclusion

Bird-shaped and bird-ornamented objects offered possibilities for Bronze Age potters to make different kind of choices to those that they were accustomed to making on a routine basis. In particular, the production of bird-shaped and bird ornamented vessels reveals creative impetus not only to add to and modify existing vessel forms in order to accommodate bird imagery, but also to reconstitute it in a radical manner so as to integrate the bird into the vessel form. Furthermore, the creative responses of potters to the bird theme were expressed in their constitution of 'birdness' in many different ways. This included abstraction, reduction, omission, and replacement of the anatomical features of the bird with functional parts of the pottery vessel, as well as by creating haptic responses to the object through sound and movement. Rather than imposing restrictions on the form and the appearance of objects, the bird's anatomical features created an opportunity for creative play and for capturing the 'essence' of the bird image through varied degrees of deviation from realism in depiction. This often resulted in highly individual objects albeit sitting within a restricted range of object categories.

Although object shapes and their 'birdness' offered fertile ground for creative exploration of shape, this was less so for decoration. This was sometimes used to accentuate aspects of the form of objects but also conformed to established local norms, thereby ensuring the cultural acceptability and integration of otherwise novel objects. Thus, while there was no single right way to make a clay bird in the Bronze Age, the creativity of the potter resided

in the process of materialising the bird form, and therefore its symbolism, into an object that fulfilled a desired utilitarian role while satisfying restrictions imposed by the ceramic tradition to which it belonged.

Towards the end of the Bronze Age and into the Early Iron Age in the Carpathian Basin and along the Lower Danube there was a shift in the representation of the bird. The importance of 'birdness' expressed through the production of individual three-dimensional objects gave way to geometric compositions and two-dimensional depictions. The schematised images of the latter still radiate the essence of a bird, but it is a mere presence without the kind of singular identity possessed by the three-dimensional objects. The Late Bronze Age approach to bird imagery on ceramics was connected to the influence of that appearing on bronze vessels, as well as bronze fittings and jewellery. This reveals a change in emphasis to a different suite of creative qualities. Rather than novelty of expression in shape, the Late Bronze Age ceramics show creative influences from other materials, with a new emphasis on geometric compositions and patterns made from abstract and highly stylised bird motifs.

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